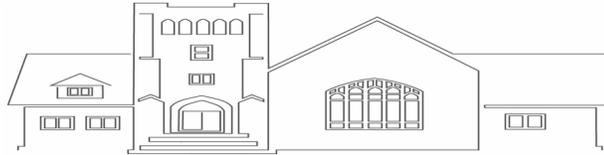


FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
NEWTON, IOWA
641-792-2790

"The Mission of First Presbyterian Church of Newton, Iowa is to share the love of God and grow the body of Christ through joyful worship and fellowship, devoted prayer and study, and humble service in our community and world."

THE MESSENGER



December 2018

Meghan's Musings

Advent Gratitude: Light Shining in the Darkness

Last month I wrote about gratitude. At the beginning of November I handed out a project: a sort of coupon book with daily prompts for people and things for which we are grateful. The idea was to go through the book each day, writing down our "gratitudes," tear off the sheet, fold it up and put it in a jar, basket, gift bag or some other receptacle of choice (not the trash can! :-D).

The second part of the project is now, in Advent. This Advent, I invite you to continue to focus on gratitude, this time with a little more latitude to come up with a way to focus on gratitude that works for you. At minimum:

- *Each day, beginning Sunday December 2, mix up your sheets of paper and pull one out.
- *Take some time to reflect on the person or thing that you wrote down in November. Set a timer for 1-5 minutes and really spend that time reflecting on the gratitude you drew out.
- *Bring in one or more photos or words of the things for which you are grateful to add to an all-church gratitude collage in Fellowship Hall (note: you might not get your pictures back so make sure to bring in pictures you can live without if necessary). If you have a gratitude for something that cannot easily be conveyed in a photo, bring it in words (or maybe even just bring in your little slip of paper).

Want to take your Advent Gratitude a step further?

- *Maybe send a letter to the person, or someone associated with that day's gratitude.
- *Maybe write in a journal about that gratitude.
- *Maybe start your own personal collage, taking or finding a picture or word(s) for your gratitude. At the end of the Advent you'll have a beautiful gratitude collage you might want to frame and hang in your home.
- *Maybe you have another creative idea. (If so, please tell me. I'd love to hear it!)

Didn't get a gratitude "coupon book" in November? We have plenty of extras, just let me know. I'll get one to you and you can do both steps together.

In a November e-newsletter from the Presbyterian Board of Pensions, I was reminded "Gratitude is a year-round response to God's grace, It is a way of being. It is living toward God's will being done 'on earth as it is in Heaven.'" Additionally, "Christians understand gratitude as a response to God's grace. We have received an abundance of gifts beyond our deserving. During Thanksgiving, as we contemplate God's grace, we are filled with wonder, humility, and gratitude. In such moments, God's love is palpable."

Continued on page 2

Continued from page 1

Clearly, gratitude is more than a once a year “thing” for the fourth Thursday of November, or even just for the entire month of November. Gratitude is for every day of the year, every year for all our days. But this Advent, as many of us struggle with current events in our nation and in our world, as some of us struggle personally with loneliness, loss, depression, or other hardships, what better way to reflect Christ’s Light Shining in Darkness than through intentional gratitude practices?

As I wind up my final “Meghan’s Musings” for 2018, I find myself filled with gratitude for YOU the wonderful family of First Presbyterian Church of Newton, Iowa. Thank you for giving me so much for which to be grateful. May your Advent be filled with Hope, Peace, Joy, Love, Light and GRATITUDE.


 IN OUR
Thoughts and Prayers


- ✚ For Zach Roskilly, who has been in the hospital.
- ✚ For Stephanie McCumber, who was in the hospital, but is now recovering at her father’s home. Stephanie is the young lady who used to accompany Matt Illingsworth to church.
- ✚ Gary and Kay Parsons daughter-in-law, who was recently diagnosed with breast cancer and is undergoing treatments.
- ✚ Linda Rex, Administrative Assistant at UP church, who also was recently diagnosed with the same type of breast cancer and is also undergoing treatments.
- ✚ For those suffering from addiction, for their family and friends who suffer with them and for those who seek to help.



We're preparing and mailing a “finals/holiday college care package” for our nine college students to show them that they are celebrated and loved members of our church family. Please bring in baked cookies, gift cards (Starbucks, any chain restaurant, Wal-Mart, etc.) and any other items that would be appreciated by a college student.

The deadline for this project is December 2, 2018.



Special Yoga Resting class December 8 at 10 am. See information about this below.

Poinsettias need to be ordered by December 19. The cost this year is \$10.00. There is an order form insert in the weekly bulletin or you can let Barbara know at the church office.

Our Blue Christmas service will be held on December 20 at 7 pm.

The All Church pageant will be held on Sunday, December 23. Christian Nurture is in charge of this annual tradition. We hope everyone will attend that day and participate in the pageant, with parts available for all ages.

The Christmas Eve service will be at 7 pm. We will follow our tradition of having lessons and carols, ending the service with candlelight. A bell choir will be offering music, as well as our chancel choir.

The church office will be closed from December 25 through January 1, 2019.

Advent Savasana (Resting) Yoga Class

Rev. Meghan Davis

This class will begin with 30 minutes of very gentle yoga (on the floor/mats) followed by 30 minutes of assisted Savasana (I'll help you get as comfy as possible and then let you drift away).

This class might be for you if one or more of these apply to you:

- 1) the resting pose at the end of yoga never feels long enough
- 2) are looking for some quiet in the midst of the busy holiday season
- 3) are just curious about a "class" on resting

Participants are encouraged to bring a pillow or two as you might find that helpful to fully, deeply relax. We'll be using yoga blankets, but you are also welcome to bring a favorite blanket if you'd like.

Saturday December 8 at 10 am in Fellowship Hall.

If you have any questions, contact Meghan!

New Officers Elected

Jen Norvell, Chair of Nominating Committee

Following worship on Sunday, November 18, a congregational meeting was held to elect our new officers for 2019. After calling the meeting to order with prayer and a quorum being declared, Rev. Davis turned the meeting over to Jen Norvell, chair of the nominating committee. Norvell thanked her committee which consisted of Diane Moles, Deacons rep; Marilyn McCallister, Session rep.; Cathy Rickers, third year at large member; Kevin Peska, second year at large member; and Jane Repp, first year at large member. Rickers was thanked for her work on the committee the past 3 years, as her term is over.

On behalf of the committee, Jen put the following names on the slate for election: Gary Parsons, first year at large member; Marilyn McCallister, George Wilkening, Larry Rossow and Jeanette Shannon for 3-year terms on Session and Dave Stolper, Linda Kirchhoff, and Taylor McGonegle for 3-year terms as Deacons. All were unanimously elected to their respective positions.

Rev. Davis closed the meeting with prayer and a blessing for the food of our Thanksgiving feast, which followed.



How to make a Church Prosper

Gary Parsons found this information from a 1923 copy of the St. John's Herald. Words to think about.

1. Attend all the services regularly.
2. If it rains or snows, make a special effort to be there. Invite someone else to go with you. You will be surprised how many people are eager to accept your invitation.
3. Think of the services, speak of them to others, and pray that they may be attended with divine blessing.
4. Pray for each member, as far as you may know them, especially for the sick and poor.
5. Pray for the Rector. His usefulness will be greatly increased by the daily prayer of his people.
6. Note the absence of members, not to criticize or find fault, but to show the proper attention in case they are sick or to encourage them if they are cast down, to restore them if they are wandering.
7. Speak to strangers and invite them to come again.

See more information from this publication on page 5. Amazing how the same suggestions from 1923 are still relevant today.

Worship and Music

Linda Kirchhoff, Chair

Worship and Music Committee did not meet in November. However the following did occur:

1. Participation in communion service for Thanksgiving feast
2. Arranged for decorating of church and putting together of Advent Book on Nov. 28
3. Arranged for 3 families to light Advent candles
4. Arranged for ushers for Christmas Eve
5. Arranged for people to hand out individual candles for Christmas Eve
6. Larry- working on choir music for Dec
7. Val McKee -setting up practice for a bell choir for Christmas Eve

How to Kill Your Church

Here is another article that Gary Parsons furnished from the 1923 St. John's Herald.

1. Don't come.
2. If you do come, come late.
3. When you come, come with a grouch.
4. At every service ask yourself, "What do I get out of this?"
5. Never accept an office. It is better to stay outside and criticize.
6. Visit other churches about half of the time to show your pastor that you are not tied down to him. There is nothing like independence.
7. Let the pastor earn his money; let him do all the work.
8. Sit pretty well back and never sing. If you have to sing, sing out of tune and behind everyone else.
9. Never pay in advance, especially for religion. Wait until you get your money's worth, and then wait a bit longer.
10. Never encourage the preacher; if you like a sermon, keep mum about it. Many a preacher has been ruined by flattery. Don't let his blood be upon your head.
11. It is good to tell your pastor's failings to any stranger that may happen in; they may be a long time finding them out.
12. Of course you can't be expected to get new members for the church with such a pastor as he is.
13. If your church unfortunately happens to be harmonious, call it apathy or indifference or lack of zeal, or anything under the sun except what it is.
14. If there happens to be a few zealous workers in the church make a tremendous protest against the church's being run by a clique.

MEMBERSHIP



It was announced that Rachel Skaggs and Taylor McGonegle have resigned from the Membership Committee due to increased outside activities as well as other church responsibilities. We will miss them. They were very valuable members of our committee and helped us a lot. We discussed people to replace them and came up with several names that we will contact.

MOMENT

Rev. Davis indicated that she had been contacted about being a part of the Christmas Walk this year involving the downtown churches. It has not been done for several years. The suggested dates are Dec. 9 or 16. It was the general feeling it was almost too late to get it done this year but Rev. Davis will try to get more information. It was mentioned that sometime it might be considered to do it after the Courthouse Lighting activity on the Friday after Thanksgiving.

We discussed the new church brochure and felt it had turned out to our liking. We hope you are happy with it, too.

Gary shared an article from the NDN that told about a new school program in conjunction with United Way that encourages high school kids to earn a varsity letter in community service by being involved in projects associated with non-profit organizations, churches, etc. It is possible some of our projects such as the Ramp Ministry might be a good choice for kids to help out and earn credit. We discussed updating the Church Directory as a probable needed upcoming project. We decided to wait until after the first of the year to start on it.

Gary Parsons reported that John and Barb Taylor were honored as Faithful Through the Years recipients at the November 13 Des Moines Presbytery meeting. Since they were at a meeting of the Presbyterian Church Camp and Conference Association, their son, Scott, accepted the award. We are planning to honor them at the Dec. 2 church service.

We discussed the Sundays at 4 presentation by Tom and Steve Weeks about their father/grandfather Marvin Weeks. Those who attended felt it was such a good presentation that we are considering having them do it again in the future, if they are willing.

We discussed some possible Membership Committee events that we could organize after Jan. 1. They are: a trip to a Drake basketball game to see Garrett Sturtz play; attending the Pacesetters Winter Program to see Allie Norvell; a trip to a Grinnell College basketball game.

It was mentioned that maybe we should try to invite people from around our church neighborhood to attend church and church activities.

Budget and Finance Corner

Jen Norvell, Chair

We are wrapping up the Stewardship campaign and want to thank all of you who have turned in your pledge cards. Once we have completed the campaign, Treasurer Cheryl Ritter will be putting together our 2019 budget. This is based on the amount of pledges as income and what the various committees are needing for next year. As in the past, some committees may have to cut back on their needs if we don't have pledges to cover them.

Church Life

Tara Zehr, Chair

Thanksgiving luncheon saw close to 60 people eat, visit and take communion on Sunday, November 19. A wide selection of food was brought with a wonderful selection of desserts! Communion was organized jointly with the Worship and Music committee. Elders at each table brought the elements to the table and served communion. Thank you to everyone who brought a dish to share.

December 16, 2018, 4:00 p.m.	Christmas caroling followed by chili supper
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Our final Church Life event of the year will be our caroling party on Sunday, December 16th, followed by a chili supper at 6:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. For those who wish to carol, we'll meet at the church at 4:00 p.m., carol around the town until about 6:00, and then return to the church for a chili supper.

If you or someone you know would appreciate our group dropping by to carol please let Tara Zehr know at 641-521-3600 or tarazehr@gmail.com

If you're willing to bring a crock pot of chili, sides, bread or cookies, please let Tara Zehr know at the above contact information. We're looking for all ages and all singing abilities! We have the song sheets ready and will carpool to the caroling sites. If you don't care to carol, please join us at 6:00 for supper.

- Your Church Life Committee



At our November meeting we took care of the following business:

- Approved the minutes of the October meeting.
- Received reports of visits made during October.
- Were informed that a couple of people on the visits list that are hard to get in contact with were reached and visits done during October.
- Were told that there is an account balance in the Deacon fund of more than \$1,000.00.
- Received the card report that 16 were sent in September and October.
- Discussed a new person being added to the visits list and one who no longer desires to have visits.



Mission Committee

Marilyn McCallister, Chair

The purpose of the Mission Committee is to recommend, approve, manage, and terminate mission projects. The committee communicates about opportunities for mission involvement and promotes congregational participation.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

We continue to generously support Neighbors Helping Neighbors Laundry Nights. On Nov. 20, Linda Curtis-Stolper turned in the most recent donation of quarters and bills from the laundry jug. A total of \$138.50 was added to the funds available to help pay for washers and dryers as NHN supports persons who otherwise might not be able to have clean clothes and bedding. Thank you! The laundry jug will continue to be available for collecting donations for future use. After a couple of months off, we will be looking for volunteers who can give of their time to help at the Laundry Night events at some point next year. Laundry Nights are held on the second and fourth Monday evenings of every month. Check your calendars and keep an eye out for the sign up sheet.

Alternative Giving?

The Christmas season ushers in a flurry of activity with special church events, extra baking and social opportunities, and shopping for those special gifts. What do you give the person who has everything? How do you keep Christmas centered on the gift of Christ that we've been given instead of simple commercialism? Why not consider an alternative gift...one that shares our abundance with those in need and helps remind us all of how fortunate we truly are. The Presbyterian Mission Agency has many programs around the world and you can participate by giving through the Presbyterian Giving Catalog. Gifts begin at \$10 and range from farm animals and bees, to school supplies or water filters. Giving catalogs have been placed around the church for your perusal. Order online at presbyteriangifts.org or order forms can be found in the catalogs. You will enjoy looking through the catalog and learning about some of the many missions of your Presbyterian church.

Christmas Joy Offering

At this time of giving the Presbyterian Church USA invites us to participate in the Christmas Joy Offering. One of the programs supported by this offering is the assistance program of the board of pensions which offers critical financial assistance to current and retired church workers and their families in need. In 2017, 362 households were given emergency grants. The Christmas Joy offering also supports Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color to prepare future leaders to serve the church and society. The Christmas Joy offering will be taken on Sunday, December 23. Look for more information about this offering in the Sunday bulletins.

Advent Angel Tree in the Narthex is decorated with angels from the Salvation Army. Each angel has the age and gender of a child from a family in need. Help out by selecting an angel from the tree, purchasing a gift, bringing the **unwrapped** gift with the angel tag attached and placing the gift under the Advent Angel Tree. Thank you for your generosity!

Days for Girls – As of 10/25/2018 one hundred sixty four (164) sustainable feminine hygiene kits were created in 2018. One hundred sixty (160) girls in Haiti received our kits during distributions in February and June, 2018. Thank you to all the donations and volunteers participating in this much needed ministry. Our first workshop in 2019 will be Thursday, January 24, 9 am – 2 pm in our fellowship hall. All are welcome!

Report of Presbytery Meeting

Mickey Van Baale, Commissioner

The 514th Stated Meeting of the Presbytery was held November 13, 2018 at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Des Moines. Moderator Midge Slater opened the meeting. Linda Anderson, Linda Curtis-Stolper, Marilyn McCallister, Gary Parsons and Mickey Van Baale attended. Rev. Meghan Davis was excused.

A very meaningful worship service entitled *Journey to Unity* was held with CRE Sarah Keyser of First Presbyterian Church of Chariton delivering the sermon, entitled *As It is Possible*. Sarah is a high school math teacher, with those students struggling with the subject and therefore at the bottom of their classes. Prior to communion, a choral Words of Institution was done by the minister and an Elder from Westminster and their organist played the harp during communion.

Linda Curtis-Stolper, moderator of CPM (Committee on the Preparation for Ministry) presented Ellen Keyser who was moved from inquirer to Candidate. She announced those who will serve as Ordination Exam readers in 2019, one being George Wilkening. Finally, it was approved that Cindy Ray, a candidate who is blind, be allowed to use alternative means to complete the ordination exam. Cindy has tried twice to pass the exam without success.

Part of the Nominating committee report was done prior to lunch. Our new Moderator for 2019 will be Rev. Alex Thornburg and the Vice-Moderator will be Sandy Wagener. Other new members to various committees were approved with those from our church being Linda Curtis-Stolper as Moderator of CPM, Bret Doerring as a member of the Living Legacy Fund Committee (class of 2019) and Karen Quinn as a member of the Sexual Misconduct Response Team (class of 2021). Rev. Kristin Pike was elected to a 3-year term as the Stated Clerk beginning January 1, 2019. Kristin will be replacing Dave Hamilton, whose 3-year term expires at the end of the year.

Following a delicious meal prepared by the members of the church, the meeting was called back to order and the Older Adult Ministries Task Force recognized 12 people for the *Faithful through the Years* distinction. One couple honored was our very own John and Barb Taylor. Unfortunately, they could not attend, but son Scott came to accept the award for his parents.

A large topic that has been ongoing since last June is the conversation between three Presbyteries in Iowa. It is not the intent of joining these three, but rather sharing staff between the three. The goal is to have all the details worked out and shared staff hired effective January 1, 2020. It was announced that June 7 and 8, 2019 there will be an All Iowa Event at Westminster Church in Des Moines. Also, listening sessions will be set and information sent out at a later time.

One of the last pieces of business was the retirement service for Rev. Marcy Campbell. Many constituents spoke of their work with Marcy and offering wishes for a happy retirement.

Stated Clerk Dave Hamilton gave his final report. Our February meeting will be held at Hartford. Host churches are still needed for the other 3 meetings in 2019.

Moderator Midge Slater turned the gavel over to new Moderator Alex Thornburg, who gave the benediction and declared the meeting closed.



2018 **BIRTHDAYS & EVENTS**

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

						1 11a Women's Coloring
2 <i>Karen Quinn</i>	3 4:45p Personnel	4 11a Gentle Yoga 1p Worship & Music	5 <i>Peter Van Elswyk</i> 9:30a Women's Bible Study 6p Membership 7p Choir	6 6:30a Early Men's Group 9a Men's Group 3p Chair Yoga	7 <i>Steve Roese</i>	8 10a Special Yoga Resting Class
9 9a Deacons	10 <i>Shirley Stevens</i>	11 <i>Joan Tyler</i> 11a Gentle Yoga 3:30p Mission	12 9:30a Women's Bible Study 6p Budget & Finance 7p Choir	13 3p Chair Yoga	14	15 11a Women's Coloring
16 4p - Caroling and chili supper	17	18 <i>Randy Ferguson</i> 11a Gentle Yoga 6:30p Session	19 <i>Amy Doerring</i> 9:30a Women's Bible Study 7p Choir	20 6:30a Early Men's Group 9a Men's Group 3p Chair Yoga 7p Blue Christmas	21	22
23 <i>All Church Christmas Pageant</i>	24 7p - Christmas Eve Service	25 Office Closed  CHRISTMAS DAY	26 Office Closed	27 Office Closed	28 <i>Linda Kirchhoff</i>	29
30 <i>Toni Peska</i>	31					

Regular Worship Schedule

9:00 a Adult Sunday School	10:30 a Worship
10:00 a Fellowship	11:30 a Fellowship

SCHEDULE
OF



VOLUNTEERS

December	2	9	16	23	30
Worship Leader <i>Mickey Van Baale</i>	Linda Curtis-Stolper	Val McKee		Linda Kirchhoff	Mickey Van Baale
Host Elder/Deacon <i>Church Life</i>	Barb Taylor	Mickey Van Baale	Linda Kirchhoff	Dana Hashman	Dave Stolper
Greeters <i>Julie Brodersen</i>	Dick & Shirley Mielke	Randy & Carol Camp	Gary & Kay Parsons	Kevin & Toni Peska	Terry Rickers Bev Rossow
Ushers <i>Mickey Van Baale</i>	Kevin & Toni Peska	Don & Sharon Black	Dan & Cheryl Ritter	Larry & Shari DeCook	Gary & Kay Parsons
Audio <i>Shirley Stevens</i>	Shirley Stevens	Kyle Doerring	Shirley Stevens And for Blue Christmas service	Brad Ritter	Shirley Stevens
Counters <i>Budget & Finance</i>	Jen Norvell Janet Shields	Terry Rickers Peggy/Chris Lickiss	Mickey Van Baale Bev Rossow	Dan Ritter Cheryl Ritter	Dave Stolper Kathy Ventling
Bread Ministry Baker <i>Barb Taylor</i>	Barb Taylor	Jane Repp	Val McKee	Dixie Zegers	Sharon Black
Bread Ministry Taker <i>Barb Taylor</i>	Barb Taylor	Carol Russell	Toni Peska	Dana Hashman	Nancy Mott
Communion Set up <i>Worship & Music</i>	Marilyn McCallister Mickey Van Baale				

First Presbyterian Church
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641-792-2790

Return Service Requested

Lectionary —

December, 2018

December 2 - 1st Sunday of Advent

Jer. 33:14-16; *Ps. 25:1-10*;
1 Thess. 3:9-13; Luke 21:25-36

December 9 - 2nd Sunday of Advent

Mal. 3:1-4; *Luke 1:68-79*;
Phil. 1:3-11; Luke 3:1-6

December 16 - 3rd Sunday of Advent

Zeph. 3:14-20; *Isa. 12:2-6*;
Phil. 4:4-7; Luke 3:7-18

December 23 - 4th Sunday of Advent

Micah 5:2-5a; *Luke 1:46b-55* or
Ps. 80:1-7; Heb. 10:5-10;
Luke 1:39-45 (46-55)

December 30 - 1st Sunday after Christmas Day

1 Sam. 2:18-20, 26; *Ps. 148*;

January, 2019

January 6 - Epiphany of the Lord

Isa. 60:1-6; *Ps. 72:1-7, 10-14*; Eph. 3:1-12;
Matt. 2:1-12

January 13 - Baptism of the Lord

Isa. 43:1-7; *Ps. 29*; Acts 8:14-17;
Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

January 20 - 2nd Sunday after Epiphany

Isa. 62:1-5; *Ps. 36:5-10*; 1 Cor. 12:1-11;
John 2:1-11

January 27 - 3rd Sunday after Epiphany

Neh. 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10; *Ps. 19*;
1 Cor. 12:12-31a; Luke 4:14-21